



# PANHANDLE

BENEWAH, BONNER, BOUNDARY, KOOTENAI, & SHOSHONE COUNTIES

## EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

*What a pleasure it is to review economic developments in the five Panhandle counties in 2004. Last year brought good news for every community and every major industrial sector in the Panhandle. In order to fit in all the good news, this newsletter doesn't contain the normal discussion of Table 1*

## 2004 YEAR IN REVIEW

### Benewah County

- Last year—2004—was the best year since 1997 for Benewah County, home to about 9,100 people. Its *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* finally returned to the 1997 level after seven years of decline and stagnation. Benewah County remains the Panhandle's most timber-dependent county with more than half (56.1 percent in 2004) of private-sector wages and salaries paid by wood products manufacturers, logging companies and related truck driving businesses. Therefore, the county benefited considerably from the run-up in lumber and plywood prices that occurred during the last two years. In early 2003, lumber prices were near a 10-year low. Random Lengths Publications reported the composite price for lumber rose from \$269 in the last week of 2002 to \$323 in the last week of 2003, peaked at \$473 in mid-August and dropped to \$380 by the last week of 2004. The county's three largest mills—the Potlatch complex in St. Maries, Regulus Stud Mill in St. Maries and Plummer Forest Products in Plummer—all added jobs between 2003 and 2004. In the *Wood Products Manufacturing* sector, total wages and salaries were up 25.0 percent, from \$4.0 million in the first half of 2003 to \$5.0 million in the first half of 2004. In the logging industry, total wages and salaries were up 35.9 percent, from \$2.9 million in the first half of 2003 to \$3.9 million in the first half of 2004. In addition, Buell Trucking, one of the county's largest employers, and other companies that haul logs, wood chips or lumber also benefited from higher lumber and plywood prices.
- Regulus Stud Mill recently started a two-year, \$10 million project that will turn the St. Maries mill into one of the nation's most efficient lumber producers. The project began with construction of a new office building. After that building is completed, Regulus will raze the old office building to accommodate mill construction, which probably will begin this spring. The new state-of-the-art mill will maximize wood utilization. Given the high cost of logs, using every possible scrap of timber is essential. Once the new mill is built, production could increase as much as 33 percent, but employment probably will remain constant at 100 employees.
- The Coeur d'Alene Tribe continues to expand employment and undertake a series of construction projects at its headquarters in Plummer and its school in DeSmet, as well as its casino, hotel and golf course just over the Benewah-Kootenai County line in Worley. Among its latest projects is construction of a \$2.5 million, 20-unit apartment complex for elderly and disabled members near its Benewah Medical & Wellness Center in Plummer. This summer, the casino completed a \$15 million restaurant renovation and hotel expansion project, doubling the number of guest rooms at its hotel to 202. The tribe employs 450 people in Benewah County and 650 people in Kootenai County (the casino complex in Worley).
- According to the Idaho Tax Commission's Travel and Convention Tax Report, hotel-motel receipts increased 19.9 percent, from \$305,848 in 2003 to \$366,591 in 2004. Despite the strong growth, Benewah's tourism sector is small relative to its potential. Benewah County's hotel-motel receipts make up less than 1.0 percent of the total hotel-motel receipts in the Idaho Panhandle.
- The Benewah Medical Center undertook a \$1.6 million construction project to create a new surgery and make other improvements at the community hospital in St. Maries. In addition, it also recently extended the hours of St. Maries Family Medicine, the hospital's clinic serving low-income individuals.
- Despite improved economic conditions, the county's retail and service sectors continue to struggle as residents increasingly shop in Kootenai, Spokane and Latah counties. Benewah County's taxable sales, as shown on the sales tax reports of the Idaho Tax Commission, fell 2.5 percent, from \$43.4 million in 2003 to \$42.3 million in 2004. Taxable sales have declined every year since 2001.
- Many sectors added jobs during 2004. Benewah County's 265 businesses employed 2,272 people in the second quarter of 2004, up 7.0 percent from the 2,124 employed in the second quarter of 2003. Governmental bodies, mostly the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, added another 50 jobs during the same period. Increased job opportunities caused the unemployment rate to fall to a seasonally adjusted 8.6 percent by December 2004. To keep employment growing, Timber Plus, the economic development organization serving the Greater St. Joe area, and the Coeur

d'Alene Tribe continue to aggressively pursue economic development opportunities.

### Bonner County

- Bonner County, with a population of 40,300, had a banner year in 2004. As reported in earlier editions of this newsletter, Bonner County became the focus of much national attention this year for its high quality of life, fabulous scenery and great recreational opportunities. The national attention led to massive construction and real estate booms. In addition, the county's manufacturing sector continued to create jobs at a good clip.
- Manufacturers—led by Unicep Packaging, Litehouse, JD Lumber Inc. and Encoder Products—added about 120 jobs between December 2003 and December 2004, bringing manufacturing employment to 2,000 jobs. That's a 7.0 percent growth in a period when U.S. manufacturing employment grew only 0.4 percent. Bonner County Economic Development Corporation has assisted several existing manufacturers to expand and recruited a number of small manufacturers to the county.
- Bonner County's tourism sector also enjoyed a great year. At least it did until Thanksgiving when disappointing weather gave the 2004/2005 ski season a rocky start. The previous ski season brought many new visitors to Schweitzer Mountain Resort in early 2004, and the summer tourist season was the best ever for the county. Hotel-motel receipts increased 17.1 percent, from \$11.3 million in 2003 to \$13.3 million in 2004. That was their strongest growth since 1997. From 1997 to 2003, Bonner County's hotel-motel receipts grew a meager 0.7 percent per year.
- Coldwater Creek, the national catalog company that has its corporate headquarters in the Sandpoint area, opened more than 50 retail stores in 2004. The company recently added jobs, bringing its employment up to 385 in the Sandpoint area, and it expects to add more than 200 jobs there over the next few years.
- Retail and services sectors prospered in 2004 because of improving economic conditions, increasing tourism and a growing population. Taxable sales, which showed negligible growth in the prior two years, rose 5.4 percent, from \$288.5 million in 2003 to \$304.2 million in 2004. At the end of 2004, Home Depot began hiring 120 employees for the store that it opened in Ponderay in January.
- With all sectors going full throttle, it's not surprising that 2004 brought strong job growth. *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* increased 4.8 percent, from 12,523 in the second quarter of 2003 to 13,119 in the second quarter of 2004. Over the same time period, the number of private-sector employers increased 3.2 percent, from 1,420 to 1,465. The county's unemployment rate has

been declining over the last three years, falling to 6.3 percent in 2004.

### Boundary County

- After the heartbreak of losing one of its largest employers—the Louisiana-Pacific mill in Bonners Ferry—the year before, Boundary County did surprisingly well in 2004. The unemployment rate to 7.1 percent in 2004. The county, its 365 private-sector employers and its 10,400 residents also laid the groundwork for future growth.
- With the U.S. housing market near record levels, higher lumber prices brought relative stability to mills and logging companies. More houses being built meant more shrubs and trees were needed, which kept the many ornamental tree nurseries in the county busy.
- One sign that Boundary County's tourism sector thrived in 2004 was the 15.4 percent increase in hotel-motel receipts, from \$2.3 million in 2003 to \$2.6 million in 2004. With the Kootenai Tribe currently completing the latest renovation and expansion at the county's largest tourism business, the Kootenai River Inn and Casino in Bonners Ferry, prospects for 2005 look excellent. The change in the value of the Canadian dollar, from a low of 63 U.S. cents in February 2002 to 82 cents in December 2004, has encouraged more Canadians to shop and play in the United States. As the entry-point for many Canadians, Boundary County has benefited.
- Visitors are enjoying the new sidewalks, lighting and landscaping that revitalized downtown Bonners Ferry in 2004, and they soon will be using the pedestrian underpass under construction to connect downtown and the Kootenai River Inn. To bring more visitors and to help local businesses grow, the Bonners Ferry Airport received a \$1.1 million grant to build a taxiway. These economic development successes are made possible by the strong cooperation among the Boundary Economic Development Corporation, the City of Bonners Ferry, Boundary County and the Kootenai Tribe.
- County residents recently celebrated the opening of the new Bonners Ferry High School, demonstrating their commitment to the county's children. The construction project was timed well, beginning soon after the L-P mill closure and bringing jobs at a time when they were especially needed.
- Another factor in Boundary County's economic growth since September 2001 is the increase in Homeland Security employment at Idaho's two ports of entry on the Canadian border.
- Adding stability to the local economy during 2004 were the CEDU/Brown schools for troubled teenagers, employing about 350 people year-round, and

Anheuser-Busch's Elk Mountain hops farm, employing 300 people at harvest.

- The increase in tourists, the growing population and high levels of construction activity fueled growth in retail and many service industries last years. Taxable sales, which declined slightly in the prior two years, rose an impressive 20.2 percent, from \$54.2 million in 2003 to \$65.2 million in 2004.

#### Kootenai County

- Kootenai County, home to approximately 122,000 people, added jobs in every major sector in 2004. *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* probably grew about 7.0 percent as construction, real estate, tourism and call centers led the list of growing industries. The county's unemployment rate fell to 5.8 percent in 2004.
- After losing one-third of their jobs in Kootenai County in 2003, call centers roared back in 2004. Employment at call centers rose from 1,457 jobs in December 2003 to nearly 2,000 jobs in December 2004 as Center Partners began expanding again and Verizon opened a third call center in Coeur d'Alene. The county also lost a call center in 2004 when the 95-employee Dakota Direct call center in downtown Coeur d'Alene closed and was later transformed by Hagadone Hospitality into the Bonsai Bistro, an Asian restaurant employing 95 people. In March 2005, U.S. Bank will open a center in Coeur d'Alene, initially employing 150 people to handle calls about credit and debit cards.
- The tourism sector rose to new heights in 2004. Hotel-motel receipts increased 9.2 percent, from \$36.3 million to \$39.6 million, rising above their 2000 level of \$37.0 million for the first time. Convention travel nearly returned to its pre-9/11 levels while private groups reached an all-time high.
- Kootenai County's manufacturing sector held its own in the first half of 2004 and showed signs of growth in the last half of the year. Its employment will increase significantly in the first quarter of 2005 as Buck Knives opens its 240-employee plant in Post Falls and three smaller manufacturing operations, employing about 50 people altogether, also move here from California.
- Jobs Plus, the notable economic development organization serving Kootenai County, recruited Buck Knives, the other California manufacturing operations, the Verizon call center, the U.S. Bank call center, the 170-employee Sysco distribution center currently hiring 170 workers for its March opening in Post Falls, the Ernest Health rehabilitation hospital that plans to open in Post Falls with 150 employees in early 2006, and several other operations to Kootenai County.
- Jobs came in a wide variety of industries in 2004. Kootenai Medical Center added about 75 jobs as it opened a state-of-the-art heart center last summer.

Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad opened a 70-employee locomotive-refueling depot near Hauser in the fall of 2004. Trucking has grown rapidly as the construction, logging, manufacturing, retail and wholesale industries grew.

- Fueled by increased tourism and a growing population, the retail sector experienced fairly strong growth in 2004. The largest retail operation to open in 2004 was the Coeur d'Alene Costco store with approximately 160 employees. Taxable sales in Kootenai County grew 4.1 percent, from \$994.0 million in 2003 to \$1,034.8 million in 2004.

#### Shoshone County

Shoshone County's 13,000 residents and its 400 private-sector employers are delighted by the changes they've seen in economic conditions during the last two years.

- Rising metals prices are giving new zip to Shoshone County's historic mainstay industry of mining. The price of silver was a relatively low \$4.63 per ounce in December 2002 then rose to a promising \$5.62 by December 2003. By December 2004, it had risen to an astonishing \$7.49. Prices of other metals that are by-products of silver mining, including gold and zinc, also rose in 2004.
- With metals prices soaring, the luster is back in the Silver Valley. Mining increased 30.1 percent, from 292 jobs in December 2003 to 380 jobs in December 2004, and has the potential to add more jobs in 2005. Most of the 2004 job gains came at Hecla Mining's Lucky Friday Mine near Mullan, which added 60 jobs and expects to add a few more jobs during the first half of 2005. Employment at the Galena Mine near Wallace remained constant at 175 employees. At the Sunshine Mine at Big Creek, which closed in February 2001, Sterling Mining Corporation is encouraged by its exploration and development efforts and has high hopes of reopening the richest silver mine in American history. In late December, Sterling Mining let a contract to Atlas Fausett Contracting of Osburn to begin underground rehabilitation of the mine's eastern workings, including the Silver Summit Tunnel. Formation Chemicals is in the process of reopening the hydrometallurgical refinery at the Sunshine mine to refine copper/cobalt, gold and silver concentrates. The refinery is expected to employ about a dozen people.
- With job opportunities on the rise in Shoshone, Kootenai and Spokane counties, about 380 Shoshone County residents were able to find employment between December 2003 and December 2004. Therefore, the number of employed residents rose 7.0 percent, from 5,450 to 5,830. About 1,100 Shoshone County residents work outside the county, mostly in neighboring Kootenai County, Washington's Spokane County and Montana's Stillwater and Lincoln counties.

- Dave Smith Motors, the well-known automotive dealership in Kellogg that is the county's largest employer, continues to lead the retail sector. Taxable sales in Shoshone County grew a strong 12.2 percent, from \$102.3 million in 2003 to \$114.8 million in 2004. Approximately three-fifths of the increase (\$7.6 million) came from sales at automotive dealerships. Dave Smith added about 30 jobs this year, bringing its employment up to 300. Rising incomes, booming construction and a growing population helped other retailers add about 45 jobs, boosting retail employment from 724 jobs in 2003 to 800 jobs in 2004.
- Silver Valley Economic Development Corporation (SVEDC), the local economic development organization, accomplished one of its long-time goals in January 2005 when North Idaho College opened a center offering college courses in Kellogg. SVEDC continues to actively recruit businesses to the county, assist local businesses to grow, and help with economic development and planning efforts. Among the SVEDC's other accomplishments were the February 2004 opening of Northpoint Financial Group's Ready Set Go call center in Smelterville, employing more than 50 people, and the January 2005 move of WindRiver Publishing from Utah to Silverton.
- The SVEDC will find it easier to recruit businesses after the recent improvements at the community hospital in Kellogg. Shoshone Medical Center celebrated the grand opening of its new 42,000-square-foot, 25-bed hospital building in January. The new building is next to the old building that will be razed later this year.
- The Silver Valley's tourism industry seems poised to move to a whole new level. After three years of no growth, hotel-motel receipts increased an impressive 12.8 percent, from \$2.5 million in 2003 to \$2.8 million in 2004. *Leisure & Hospitality* grew an estimated 7.1 percent, from 420 jobs in 2003 to 450 jobs in 2004. An excellent 2003/2004 ski season was followed by the best ever summer season. Silver Mountain, the ski resort and gondola in Kellogg with 200 employees, expanded its days of operation and provided more summer opportunities than ever before. Eagle Crest Resorts, which owns Silver Mountain, plans to build a golf course near the gondola's base as well as hundreds of condominiums and a retail village over the next few years. Lookout Pass, a ski area employing 70 people near the Idaho-Montana border, expanded its ski runs and added chairlifts in 2003, opened an expanded ski lodge in late 2004 and plans to add five ski runs in 2005. Over the last few years, local businesses have profited from ever-growing numbers of bicyclists and other users of two rails-to-trails projects—the Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes, running from Mullan to Plummer, and the Route of the Hiawatha, running from Lookout Pass into Montana.
- After two decades of depressed real estate activity, Shoshone County's real estate market and its construction activity rose to new heights in 2004. Together, the real estate and construction industries added about 70 jobs between 2003 and 2004. The change in conditions became apparent in April when, in four days, Eagle Crest sold all 64 condominium units it's building next to Silver Mountain. Since then, residential and commercial property has been moving at unprecedented levels and at prices far above what they would have sold for two years ago.

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## CURRENT (2005) AREA DEVELOPMENTS

### Ski Areas

This winter was a huge disappointment for skiers and the communities that rely on their spending. The ski season started late and ended early. As it normally does, Lookout Pass, the small ski area near Mullan that employs about 60 people, opened earlier than the other two ski areas when it started up a week before Thanksgiving. Silver Mountain Resort in Kellogg, which normally employs 200 people for the ski season, managed to open December 3, and missed the lucrative Thanksgiving weekend. Because of poor snow conditions, ski visits were 40 percent lower in December 2004 than the same month the year before. The largest ski area, Schweitzer Mountain Resort near Sandpoint with 600 employees, didn't open until December 18. Even after they opened, the ski areas had to limit access to runs because of a lack of snow. In order to attract visitors, some of the ski areas reduced fees. Really good snow conditions didn't occur until New Year's. There was a couple of weeks of fairly good skiing, then came the so-called pineapple express—warm winds and rains that melted the snow base. Although later snowfalls allowed some resurgence in skiing and snowboarding, they were too little, too late. Schweitzer threw in the towel on March 7, the earliest it has closed in its 41-year history. Silver Mountain announced in late February it no longer would be open on Mondays through Wednesdays.

The low level of skiing, snowboarding and snowmobiling activities definitely took a toll on the tourism and retail sectors of Bonner County (home to Schweitzer) and Shoshone County (home to Lookout and Silver Mountain). From December 1, 2004, to February 28, 2005, hotel-motel receipts in Bonner County totaled \$1.8 million, according to Idaho travel and convention tax statistics. That was 22.0 percent lower than the \$2.4 million reported between December 2003 and February 2004. Shoshone County's hotel-motel receipts of \$392,252 this ski season were 6.2 percent lower than the \$418,125 reported the previous ski season.

### Benewah County

- Emerald Creek Garnet recently received permission from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to destroy wetland in phases, which will allow it to expand its mining

operations along the St. Joe River. Emerald Creek Garnet currently mines a small area near Fernwood. Now it has permission to mine new garnet deposits in 327 acres along Highway 3 southeastern of Fernwood. In an average year of the 20-year project, it will mine 16 acres. The mining operation has committed to making several reclamation efforts. Emerald Creek Garnet produces half the garnets mined in the United States and 10 percent of the garnets in the world. The industrial garnets from the Fernwood area are uniquely hard and are used for water filtration, abrasives and water jet cutting. Currently 35 people work for Emerald Creek Garnet, which is a subsidiary of Coeur d'Alene-based WGI Heavy Minerals Incorporated.

- As early as April, residents of Benewah and Kootenai counties may be able to ride on five new buses that will carry 28 to 35 passengers on fixed routes including Post Falls, Coeur d'Alene, Worley, Plummer and DeSmet seven days a week.
- In a cooperative venture headed by the Kootenai County Commissioners, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe has agreed to pay matching dollars for a Federal Transit Administration grant to provide for the \$1.4 million transportation system. John Austin of the Panhandle Area Council assisted the county commissioners in the effort, which has the endorsement of the Kootenai Metropolitan Planning Organization.
- The bus helps the tribe by bringing people to the casino and transporting residents around the reservation and into Coeur d'Alene for medical visits, shopping and schooling. At the same time, it gives Kootenai planning group a running start on the fixed-route bus service it [was hoping \(hopes\)](#) to create.
- Stops will include the North Idaho College Workforce Training Center in Post Falls; Kootenai Medical Center, the Silver Lake Mall, and North Idaho College in Coeur d'Alene; the Coeur d'Alene Casino and Circling Raven Golf Course in Worley; the Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes and the Benewah Medical and Wellness Center in Plummer; and the tribal school in DeSmet. In Coeur d'Alene, the Kootenai Area Transportation System on-call busses can be scheduled to transport people from their homes to the bus stops.

### Bonner County

- Hidden Lakes Golf Resort, eight miles east of Sandpoint along the Pack River and Lake Pend Oreille, recently hired Nicklaus Design to redesign its 18-hole golf course. Owner Dick Vilelli believes the remodel will make the golf course one of the nation's top-ranked courses. Three North Idaho courses—the Coeur d'Alene Resort's course, the Black Rock development's course along Lake Coeur d'Alene and the Coeur d'Alene Tribe's Circling Raven near Worley—already are among the top-ranked courses. Vilelli currently plans several developments for condominiums

and houses on the Hidden Lake Resort's 1,600-plus acres.

- Harold's Super Foods, a family-owned grocery store that has served Sandpoint since 1943, is closing in mid-March. The store, located on Oak Street between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5th streets, is the only grocery store serving downtown. It employs nearly 40 people who will be assisted in finding jobs by Idaho Commerce and Labor staff in Sandpoint. Panhandle State Bank, the Sandpoint-based bank that is Idaho's largest independent bank, has expressed interest in building a corporate headquarters there.

### Boundary County

- CEDU Educational Services closed Rocky Mountain Academy, a 23-year-old school in Naples serving troubled teens, on February 14. The academy was the first of the CEDU programs offered in North Idaho, but in recent years the other programs—including Northwest Academy, Boulder Creek Academy and Ascent—grew while the Rocky Mountain organization declined. Four years ago, Rocky Mountain Academy enrollment peaked at 140 students; by early 2005, only 19 students were enrolled there. When a few key staff members resigned earlier this year, CEDU decided to close it. Most of the students were transferred to other CEDU programs in the Bonners Ferry area, as were most of the employees. About 10 employees lost their jobs. CEDU remains the largest private-sector employer in Boundary County with more than 260 employees. It also has 20 employees at its offices in Sandpoint.
- Partnerships for Inclusion, serving Bonner County children with autism and development delays since 1999 and now also serving adults with disabilities, recently moved to a larger space at 6334 Main St. on Bonners Ferry's South Hill. Partnerships for Inclusion employs more than 20 people. In the future, it plans to open an inclusive preschool for children with and without disabilities.
- Who would ever have thought there would be a day when Boundary County had so many new businesses opening that space limitations would force us to list them rather than to write a separate paragraph about each? Over the last four years, this newsletter has included information about 12 new businesses that opened in Boundary County. Today's newsletter contains information about seven new businesses that demonstrate faith in Boundary County's long-term growth. Those new businesses are:
  - » Best Satellite, which began offering satellite TV and broadband Internet services in the Bonners Ferry area in January and is owned by Don and Stephanie Creigo;
  - » Bonners Ferry Candy and Creations, opened December 7 by Tina South who makes fudge, choco-

lates, caramels, peanut brittle, and other candies and sells gift items including leatherwork, etchings and jewelry crafted by local artisans at 6416 Bonner St. in downtown Bonners Ferry;

- » Davey's Furniture and Upholstery Shop, opened in January by upholsters Stan and Andrea Davey at 6823 Eisenhower St. in Bonners Ferry;
- » Hubbard and Associates CPA, opened in January by CPA Jolene Hubbard and her father Roy Jaynes at 6504 Tyler St. on Bonners Ferry's South Hill;
- » Massage for Health, opened by massage therapist Amy Comer in February next to the Rex Theater in downtown Bonners Ferry;
- » South Hill Videos & Sports Cards, opened December 9 by Joe and Sharon Santos in the old Shell station on Bonners Ferry's South Hill; and
- » the Hatha yoga studio that Sharon Allured will open March 14 in the Bonnerport Building in downtown Bonners Ferry.

### Kootenai County

*See the Benewah County developments for information about a bus service that will begin providing fixed-route service in April to Post Falls, Hayden, Coeur d'Alene, Worley and Benewah County sites.*

- In February, Coeur d'Alene voters passed two bond measures—a \$3 million bond for building a new library and a \$7 million bond that will allow firefighters and local law enforcement to build a training center, help buy fire trucks and equipment, remodel two fire stations and hire more employees. Construction of the \$6.6 million, 42,000-square-foot library across from Coeur d'Alene City Hall is expected to begin this year and be completed in 2006.
- Best Buy opened its first store in North Idaho in late February. The \$3.5 million, 20,000-square-foot electronics store near the intersection of U.S. 95 and Wilbur Avenue in Coeur d'Alene employs nearly 70 people.
- A district court judge ordered BNSF Railway, which recently changed its name from Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Co., to stop operations February 24 at its locomotive refueling depot near Hauser after two fuel leaks were discovered. The \$42 million refueling depot, which fueled up to 40 trains a day, opened in September. The depot is located immediately above the Rathdrum aquifer, which is the main source of drinking water for more than 500,000 people living in Kootenai and Spokane counties. The Railway wants to resume operations, but several local groups oppose the reopening. The operation currently has reassigned 40 of its depot employees to other projects.

### Shoshone County

- Beehives Homes, owner of two assisted living facilities in Coeur d'Alene, plans to build a \$3 million nursing home, including several assisted living units in Kel-

logg. About 40 people will be employed once it completed in early 2006.

- WindRiver Publishing, a two-year-old company that publishes and distributes family-oriented and Christian books, recently moved from St. George, Utah, to Silverton. Currently, WindRiver is located in a building next to the Silver Valley Medical Center that closed in 1998. After renovations of the main hospital building are completed in a few months, the publisher will move into the 26,000-square-foot building. Last fall, WindRiver's owners were looking for a larger place with greater proximity to a freeway, and Silver Valley Economic Development Corporation showed them what Shoshone County has to offer, including the large building near Interstate 90. The publishing company currently employs three people, expects to employ eight to ten people two years from now and will eventually expand to employ 30 to 50 people.
- Furniture Exchange & Trustworthy Hardware at 101 N. Hill in Kellogg recently added a 6,000-square-foot extension, bringing its total area up to 20,000-square feet. The additional space will allow the 18-year-old store to expand every department. The county's population growth and the increase in residential construction make it a good time for a furniture, appliance and hardware store to expand.
- Dave Smith Motors, the auto dealership employing more than 300 people in Kellogg, is awarding grants of up to \$2,000 each for storefront improvements. Members of the Historic Silver Valley Chamber of Commerce may submit one-page applications. Dave Smith Motors will donate \$2,000 per month for 12 months for the program, which will enhance Kellogg's visual appeal to visitors.

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